



Legislative Department  
Seattle City Council  
Memorandum

**Date:** March 20, 2010

**To:** Councilmember Sally J. Clark, Chair  
Councilmember Tim Burgess, Vice Chair  
Councilmember Sally Bagshaw, Member  
Committee on the Built Environment (COBE)

**From:** Rebecca Herzfeld and Michael Jenkins, Council Central Staff

**Subject:** March 20, 2010 Special COBE Meeting: Updates to Multifamily Zones

To continue the review of regulations for Lowrise multifamily zones, we are requesting direction from the Committee on two topics:

1. Parking requirements for multifamily housing in urban villages
2. Height limits for Lowrise 3 and Lowrise 4 zones.

**1A. Parking Requirements for multifamily housing in urban villages**

On February 3, COBE members directed staff to investigate whether the multifamily parking requirements in urban villages should be eliminated, in both residential and commercial zones. Last year, the Council removed the parking requirement for multifamily housing in all urban centers except Northgate, and in Station Area Overlay Districts. The Council also reduced the general parking requirement for multifamily development to one space per dwelling unit.

Comprehensive Plan Policy LU49 provides general guidance about parking requirements:

“Seek to further this Plan’s goal of encouraging the use of public transit, carpools, walking, and bicycles as alternatives to the use of single-occupancy vehicles when setting parking requirements for both single-occupant vehicles and their alternatives. When setting new requirements for off-street parking, balance the goals of accommodating the parking demand generated by new development and avoiding on-street congestion of parked cars with the goals of lowering construction costs and discouraging single-occupant vehicles...”

To support this policy, parking requirements should minimize parking spillover on the one hand and discourage under-used parking on the other. Policy LU49 recognizes that requiring more than the necessary amount of parking can add significantly to construction costs. Parking provided below grade typically costs about \$50,000 per space.

The Comprehensive Plan also includes a policy that more specifically addresses parking requirements in urban villages and centers. Policy LU50 states:

“In urban centers and urban villages, consider removing minimum parking requirements and setting parking maximums in recognition of the increased pedestrian, bicycle and transit accessibility these areas already provide or have planned. Parking requirements for urban centers and villages should account for local conditions and planning objectives.”

Policy LU50 builds on the Comprehensive Plan intent to “promote the growth of urban villages as compact mixed-use neighborhoods in order to support walking and transit use, and to provide services and employment close to residences” (Policy UV1).

Based on the Comprehensive Plan and our analysis, which was done in collaboration with Department of Planning and Development (DPD) and the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) staff, we are proposing to eliminate the multifamily parking requirement in urban villages for lots located within ¼ mile (1,320 feet) from a street with frequent transit service. SDOT transportation planners have stated that ¼ mile is the standard distance that people will walk to take most forms of transit (the distance for light rail is ½ mile). Because frequent transit service is provided in most urban villages, as well as easy walking access to neighborhood shopping and other amenities, fewer residents need to use an automobile regularly.

“Frequent transit service” is defined by SDOT as:

- Transit service headways of 15 minutes or less for at least 12 hours per day, 6 days per week, and
- Transit service headways of 30 minutes or less for at least 18 hours every day.

Attachment A is a map provided by SDOT showing areas with frequent transit service and the urban village boundaries.

Of the 24 urban villages outside of urban centers, 21 would fully or partially meet the proposed standard for frequent transit service. Lake City, South Park, and Admiral are the three urban villages that do not currently meet the standard. In addition to these three urban villages, there are 200 acres in five urban villages (Ballard, West Seattle Junction, Rainier Beach, MLK@ Holly Street, and Bitter Lake) where multi-family or commercially zoned land is outside the ¼ mile distance from frequent transit service. Most of this land is located in Ballard (approximately 85 acres) and Rainier Beach (approximately 71 acres), and is zoned Lowrise Duplex Triplex (LDT) or Lowrise 1 (L1). These are lower density zones where we expect that parking would be provided even if the requirement is removed.

Regardless of zoning regulations, developers are likely to still respond to market demand. We believe that a developer will build an appropriate amount of parking that is tailored to the housing type, proximity to transit and neighborhood services, and the expected unit occupancy. As shown in Table 1, this has been the case since the 2007 changes that eliminated the minimum parking requirement for all types of uses in commercial zones in urban centers and station area overlay districts (station areas).

**Table 1: Parking provided in Commercial Zones in Urban Centers and Station Areas since 2007**

| Number of Projects | Average space per unit if <b>all</b> parking is attributed to residential use | Average space per unit if estimated commercial parking is subtracted* |
|--------------------|---|---|
| 25                 | 0.8   | 0.65  |

\* All 25 projects included a mix of residential and commercial uses. We assumed that 1 space per 500 square feet was provided for the commercial development.

Table 1 illustrates that even in the densest areas of Seattle that have frequent transit service, parking is still provided due to market demand and financing requirements, at a ratio greater than half a space per unit. Therefore, eliminating the multifamily parking requirement in urban villages is unlikely to result in structures that do not provide parking, because developers would still respond to market demand. Developers of larger rental apartment buildings are more likely to reduce the number of parking spaces than builders of rowhouses, townhouses, and condominiums.

Over the long term, eliminating the parking requirement in urban villages that have frequent transit service would help meet the Comprehensive Plan policies cited above. If the parking requirement is eliminated, and there is less demand for on-site parking, developers could adjust gradually to the changing market without having to come back to the Council for further amendments to the parking requirement.

If the Council agrees with this proposal, we also recommend making three companion amendments to the City's parking policies under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA), similar to the changes made last year when the parking requirement for multifamily housing in urban centers was eliminated. The first proposed amendment would state that in urban villages that have frequent transit service, the decision-maker for a project (usually the Director of DPD) has no authority under SEPA to condition a residential project for parking impacts. This would prevent the use of SEPA to undermine the Council's policy direction for urban villages.

The second proposed SEPA amendment would add Uptown to the list of urban centers where SEPA cannot be used to condition multifamily projects for parking. This urban center was inadvertently left off the list when SEPA amendments were made last year.

The third amendment would clarify the SEPA policies could not be used to require other parking mitigation measures for residential uses in urban centers, station areas, and qualifying urban villages. The possible measures listed in the SEPA policies, such as requiring a transportation management plan or transit pass subsidies, work much more effectively for nonresidential uses than for housing.

The proposed changes to the Land Use Code and SEPA policies would read as follows, with new wording shown underlined and deleted text ~~crossed out~~:

**Land Use Code Amendments**  
**23.54.015 - Required parking**

A. Minimum parking requirements. The minimum number of off-street motor vehicle parking spaces required for specific uses is set forth in Table A for nonresidential uses other than institutional uses, Table B for residential uses, and Table C for institutional uses, except as otherwise provided in this Section and Section 23.54.020. The minimum parking requirements are based upon gross floor area of a use within a structure and the square footage of a use when located outside of an enclosed structure, or as otherwise specified. Exceptions to the parking requirements set forth in this section are provided in subsection B and in Section 23.54.020, Parking quantity exceptions, unless otherwise specified. This chapter does not apply to parking for construction activity, which is regulated by SMC 23.42.044.

**B. Parking requirements for specific zones**

1. Parking in downtown zones is regulated by Section 23.49.019 and not by this Section 23.54.015;

2. Parking for major institution uses in major institution overlay zones is regulated by Section 23.54.016 and not by this Section 23.54.015; and

3. Parking for motor vehicles for uses located in the Northgate Overlay District is regulated by Section 23.71.016 and not by this Section 23.54.015.

\* \* \*

| <b>Table B</b><br><b>for Section 23.54.015</b><br><b>PARKING FOR RESIDENTIAL USES</b> |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Use</b>  | <b>Minimum parking required</b>  |
| <b>A. General Residential Uses</b>  |  |
| A. Adult family homes   | 1 space for each dwelling unit   |
| B. Artist's studio/dwellings  | 1 space for each dwelling unit   |
| C. Assisted living facilities   | 1 space for each 4 assisted living units; plus<br>1 space for each 2 staff members on-site at<br>peak staffing time; plus<br>1 barrier-free passenger loading and unloading<br>space |
| D. Caretaker's Quarters   | 1 space for each dwelling unit   |
| E. Congregate residences  | 1 space for each 4 residents   |
| F. Floating homes   | 1 space for each dwelling unit   |
| G. Mobile home parks  | 1 space for each mobile home lot as defined in<br>Chapter 22.904   |

| <b>Table B</b><br><b>for Section 23.54.015</b><br><b>PARKING FOR RESIDENTIAL USES</b>  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Use</b>   | <b>Minimum parking required</b>   |
| H. Multifamily residential uses, except as provided in Sections B or C of this Table B for Section 23.54.015. (1)  | 1 space per dwelling unit.  |
| I. Nursing homes (2)   | 1 space for each 2 staff doctors; plus<br>1 additional space for each 3 employees; plus<br>1 space for each 6 beds  |
| J. Single-family residences  | 1 space for each dwelling unit  |
| <b>B. Residential Use Requirements with Location Criteria</b>  |   |
| K. Residential uses in commercial and multifamily zones within urban centers or within the Station Area Overlay District (1)   | No minimum requirement  |
| <u>L. Residential uses in commercial and multifamily zones within urban villages, when the residential use is located within 1,320 feet of a street with frequent transit service, measured as the walking distance from the nearest transit stop to the lot line of the lot containing the residential use. (1)</u> | <u>No minimum requirement</u>   |
| <del>LM</del> . Multifamily residential uses within the University of Washington parking impact area shown on Map A for 23.54.015 (1)  | 1 space per dwelling unit for dwelling units with fewer than two bedrooms; plus<br>1.5 spaces per dwelling units with 2 or more bedrooms; plus<br>.25 spaces per bedroom for dwelling units with 3 or more bedrooms |
| <del>MN</del> . Multifamily dwelling units within the Alki area shown on Map B for Section 23.54.015 (1)   | 1.5 spaces for each dwelling unit   |
| <b>C. Multifamily Requirements with Income Criteria or Location Criteria and Income Criteria</b>   |   |
| <del>NO</del> . Low-income elderly multifamily residential uses (1) (3) not located in urban centers or within the Station Area Overlay District   | 1 space for each 6 dwelling units   |
| <del>OP</del> . Low-income disabled multifamily residential uses (1) (3) not located in urban centers or within the Station Area Overlay District  | 1 space for each 4 dwelling units   |
| <del>PQ</del> . Low-income elderly/low-income disabled multifamily residential uses (1) <del>(4)</del> <u>(3)</u> not located in urban centers or within in  | 1 space for each 5 dwelling units   |

| <b>Table B</b><br><b>for Section 23.54.015</b><br><b>PARKING FOR RESIDENTIAL USES</b>  |                                 |
|--|---------------------------------|
| <b>Use</b>   | <b>Minimum parking required</b> |
| the Station Area Overlay District  |                                 |
| <p>(1) The general requirement of line H of Table B for multifamily residential uses is superseded to the extent that a use, structure or development qualifies for either a greater or a lesser parking requirement (which may include no requirement) under any other provision. To the extent that a multifamily residential use fits within more than one line in Table B, the least of the applicable parking requirements applies, except that if an applicable parking requirement in section B of Table B requires more parking than line H, the parking requirement in line H does not apply. The different parking requirements listed for certain categories of multifamily residential uses shall not be construed to create separate uses for purposes of any requirements related to establishing or changing a use under this Title 23.</p> <p>(2) For development within single family zones the Director may waive some or all of the parking requirements according to Section 23.44.015 as a special or reasonable accommodation. In other zones, if the applicant can demonstrate that less parking is needed to provide a special or reasonable accommodation, the Director may, as a Type I decision, reduce the requirement. The Director shall specify the parking required and link the parking reduction to the features of the program that allow such reduction. The parking reductions shall be valid only under the conditions specified, and if the conditions change, the standard requirements shall be met.</p> <p>(3) Notice of Income Restrictions. Prior to issuance of any permit to establish, construct or modify any use or structure, or to reduce any parking accessory to a multifamily residential use, if the applicant relies upon these reduced parking requirements, the applicant shall record in the King County Office of Records and Elections a declaration signed and acknowledged by the owner(s), in a form prescribed by the Director, which shall identify the subject property by legal description, and shall acknowledge and provide notice to any prospective purchasers that specific income limits are a condition for maintaining the reduced parking requirement.</p> |                                 |

## 23.84A.012 - “F”

\* \* \*

“Frequent Transit Service.” See “Transit Service, Frequent.”

\* \* \*

## 23.84A.038 - “T”

\* \* \*

“Transit Service, Frequent” means transit service headways of 15 minutes or less for at least 12 hours per day, 6 days per week, and transit service headways of 30 minutes or less for at least 18 hours every day.

\* \* \*

## SEPA Amendment

### 25.05.675 Specific environmental policies.

\* \* \*

#### M. Parking.

##### 1. Policy Background.

a. Increased parking demand associated with development projects may adversely affect the availability of parking in an area.

b. Parking regulations to mitigate most parking impacts and to accommodate most of the cumulative effects of future projects on parking are implemented through the City's Land Use Code. However, in some neighborhoods, due to inadequate off-street parking, streets are unable to absorb parking spillover. The City recognizes that the cost of providing additional parking may have an adverse effect on the affordability of housing.

##### 2. Policies.

a. It is the City's policy to minimize or prevent adverse parking impacts associated with development projects.

b. Subject to the overview and cumulative effects policies set forth in Sections 25.05.665 and 25.05.670, the decisionmaker may condition a project to mitigate the effects of development in an area on parking; provided that:

1) No SEPA authority is provided to mitigate the impact of development on parking availability in the ~~downtown zones~~ Downtown and South Lake Union Urban Centers;

2) ~~In Seattle Mixed (SM) zones, and No SEPA authority is provided for the decisionmaker to require more parking than the minimum required by the Land Use Code~~ mitigate the impact of development on parking availability for residential uses located within:

i. the Capitol Hill/First Hill Urban Center, the Uptown Urban Center, and the University District Northwest Urban Center, except the portion of the Ravenna urban village that is not within one-quarter mile of frequent transit service Village;

ii. ~~and the Station Area Overlay District;~~ and

iii. urban villages within one-quarter mile of frequent transit service ~~no SEPA authority is provided for the decisionmaker to require more parking than the minimum required by the Land Use Code;~~

3) Outside of the areas listed in subsection 25.05.675.M.2.b, ~~Parking~~ parking impact mitigation for multifamily development, except in the Alki area, as described in subsection 25.05.675.M.2.c ~~below~~, may be required only where on-street parking is at capacity, as defined by the Seattle Department of Transportation or where the development itself would cause on-street parking to reach capacity as so defined.

c. For the Alki area, as identified on Map B for 23.45.015, a higher number of spaces per unit than is required by SMC Section 23.54.015 may be required to mitigate the adverse parking impacts of specific multifamily projects. Projects that generate a greater need for parking and that are located in places where the street cannot absorb that need -- for example, because of proximity to the Alki Beach Park -- may be required to provide additional parking spaces to meet the building's actual need. In determining that need, the size of the development project, the size of the units and the number of bedrooms in the units shall be considered.

d. When parking ~~Parking~~ impact mitigation is authorized by this subsection 25.05.675.M, it for projects outside of downtown zones may include but is not limited to:

- 1) Transportation management programs;
- 2) Parking management and allocation plans;
- 3) Incentives for the use of alternatives to single-occupancy vehicles, such as transit pass subsidies, parking fees, and provision of bicycle parking space;
- 4) Increased parking ratios, ~~except for projects located within Seattle Mixed (SM) zones, and residential uses located in, the Capitol Hill/First Hill Urban Center, the University District Northwest Urban Center Village, and the Station Area Overlay District;~~ and

- 5) Reduced development densities to the extent that it can be shown that reduced parking spillover is likely to result; provided, that parking impact mitigation for multifamily development may not include reduction in development density.

\* \* \*



## Committee direction on multifamily parking requirements in urban villages:

### 1B. Related Parking Amendment

If the Committee approves the change to multifamily parking requirements in urban villages, we also would like to propose three related amendments to subsection 23.54.020.F of the Land Use Code. This subsection provides a parking exception that allows a 20% parking reduction for sites within 800 feet of a street with 15 minutes transit headways at midday.

The first change we are recommending is to increase the qualifying distance to the transit service to 1,320 feet (1/4 mile) from 800 feet. As noted above, a quarter mile is the accepted standard for the distance that people will walk to take most forms of transit. This would increase the area on either side of a qualifying transit street by 520 feet, or about one to one and a half blocks.

The second change, which was recommended by SDOT staff, is to use the “frequent transit service” definition for the exception for multifamily and commercial zones. Under the new definition, the same or slightly more areas are likely to qualify for the parking exception. We are not recommending changing the service definition for industrial zones, because there the exception is geared toward peak commute trips, rather than towards uses that generate activity throughout the day.

The third change would be to use the term “transit stop” instead of “bus stop” in the exception. This would clarify that street car stops and other types of transit service would qualify in additions to buses.

The proposed changes to the exception for lots near streets with frequent transit service would read as follows, with new wording shown underlined and deleted text ~~crossed out~~:

### 23.54.020 - Parking quantity exceptions

\* \* \*

#### F. Reductions to Minimum Parking Requirements

\* \* \*

##### 2. Transit Reduction:

a. In multifamily and commercial zones, the minimum parking requirement for all uses may be reduced by 20 percent when the use is located within ~~800~~ 1,320 feet of a street with ~~midday~~ frequent transit service ~~headways of 15 minutes or less in each direction.~~ This distance will be the walking distance measured from the nearest ~~bus~~ transit stop to the lot line of the lot containing the use.

b. In industrial zones, the minimum parking requirement for a nonresidential use may be reduced by 15 percent when the use is located within ~~800~~ 1,320 feet of

a street with peak transit service headways of 15 minutes or less ~~in each direction~~. This distance will be the walking distance measured from the nearest ~~bus~~ transit stop to the lot line of the lot containing the use.

\* \* \*

**Committee direction on related parking amendments:**

On a final note related to parking, we also wanted to follow up on a question raised by Councilmember Bagshaw at the March 10 COBE meeting. She was interested in whether there are any incentives in the Land Use Code for shared vehicles, such as those provided by the Zipcar Company. Such shared cars are available to members for rental by the hour or the day. The Land Use Code does provide an incentive for shared vehicles. In buildings with fewer than 20 parking spaces, each space for a shared vehicle reduces the required parking by one space, or 5%, whichever is less. In buildings with 20 or more parking spaces, each shared vehicle reduced the parking requirement by three spaces, or 15%, whichever is less. We are not proposing any changes to the shared vehicle incentive.

**2. Height Limits in Lowrise 3 and Lowrise 4 Multifamily Zones**

At previous COBE meetings, you directed staff to work on combining the current L3 and L4 zones into one new Lowrise 3 (LR3) zone, and to investigate increasing the current height limit in L3 zones from 30 feet to 35 or 37 feet. The goals of increasing the height are to encourage better structure design, more livable interior spaces with higher ceiling heights, a greater variety of building types, and encouraging more development in areas targeted for growth.

The height limit in the current L3 zone was lowered in 1989 from 37 feet to 30 feet. This action prohibited the construction of four story buildings in the L3 zone. The height limit in the L4 zone, a category that was created after 1989, is 37 feet, which does permit four stories, although not at optimum floor to ceiling heights.

As you discussed at your last meeting, the optimum structure height allows for up to ten feet from floor to floor (nine feet from floor to ceiling with one foot for structural support). In order to gain four stories within 37 feet, a developer must either reduce floor to ceiling heights, and/or partially bury the first floor below grade. While these options are available in L4 zones, this zone comprises only 211 acres (6%) of all lowrise zoned land. In contrast, 52% of all lowrise zoned land (1,840 acres) is currently zoned L3. Therefore, the height reductions made in 1989 effectively removed four-story apartment buildings as a potential housing type in lowrise multifamily zones.

Our recommendations are summarized in Table 2 below. The table shows the current and proposed height limit that applies from the ground to the top of the structure wall, which we have called the “base height”. In addition, the table shows the current and proposed height exception for pitched roofs, and the proposed exception for accommodating a floor that is partially below grade. Such a floor allows the structure to be elevated above street level to provide more privacy.

**Table 2: Comparison of Current and Proposed Height Limits in Lowrise 3 and 4 Zones**

| Zone Category   | Current Base Height Limit | Current Height Limit Exceptions        | Proposed Base Height Limit <sup>(1)</sup> | Proposed Height Limit Exceptions  | Change to base height limit |
|---|---------------------------|--|---|---|-----------------------------|
| Rowhouses and Townhouses  |                           |  |   |   |                             |
| Lowrise 3   | 30'                       | Up to 5 feet for roofs pitched at 4:12 | 30';<br>Maximum of 3 stories              | Either: Up to 10 feet for a 6:12 pitched roof; OR   | None; OR                    |
|   |                           |  |   | Up to 5 feet for roofs pitched at 6:12; AND up to 4 feet to accommodate partially below grade floor | 4 foot increase             |
| Lowrise 4   | 37'                       | Up to 5 feet for roofs pitched at 4:12 | 30';<br>Maximum of 3 stories              | Either: Up to 10 feet for a 6:12 pitched roof; OR   | 7 foot decrease; OR         |
|   |                           |  |   | Up to 5 feet for roofs pitched at 6:12; AND up to 4 feet to accommodate partially below grade floor | 4 foot increase             |
| Apartments Outside Designated Growth Areas <sup>(2)</sup>   |                           |  |   |   |                             |
| Lowrise 3   | 30'                       | Up to 5' for roofs pitched at 4:12     | 37'                                       | Up to 5' for roofs pitched at 6:12  | 7 foot increase             |
| Lowrise 4   | 37'                       | Up to 5' for roofs pitched at 4:12     | 37'                                       | Up to 5' for roofs pitched at 6:12  | None                        |
| Apartments Inside Designated Growth Areas <sup>(2)</sup>  |                           |  |   |   |                             |
| Lowrise 3   | 30'                       | Up to 5' for roofs pitched at 4:12     | 40';<br>Maximum of 4 stories              | Up to 5' for roofs pitched at 6:12; OR up to 4' to accommodate partially below grade floor          | 14 feet increase            |
| Lowrise 4   | 37'                       | Up to 5' for roofs pitched at 4:12     | 40';<br>Maximum of 4 stories              | Up to 5' for roofs pitched at 6:12; OR up to 4' to accommodate partially below grade floor          | 7 feet increase             |
| <sup>(1)</sup> On lots that abut a single family zone, the height limit would be 30 feet for a distance of 50 feet from the lot line(s) that abut the single family zone. |                           |  |   |   |                             |
| <sup>(2)</sup> Designated growth areas are urban centers, urban villages, and station area overlay districts.   |                           |  |   |   |                             |

We are proposing to tailor the heights limits in the LR3 zone to the housing type and, for apartments, to location. This is explained below in greater detail. In addition, we recommend that a height limit of 30 feet should apply in all locations to all housing types for a distance of 50 feet from lot lines that abut a single family (SF) zoned lot. Because the height limit in SF zones is 30 feet, this would provide a transition between multifamily and LR3 zones. Note that cottage housing would continue to have an 18 foot height limit, but that this lower-density housing type is not likely to be built in an LR3 zone.

## **2A. Height Limits for Rowhouses and Townhouses in LR3 zones**

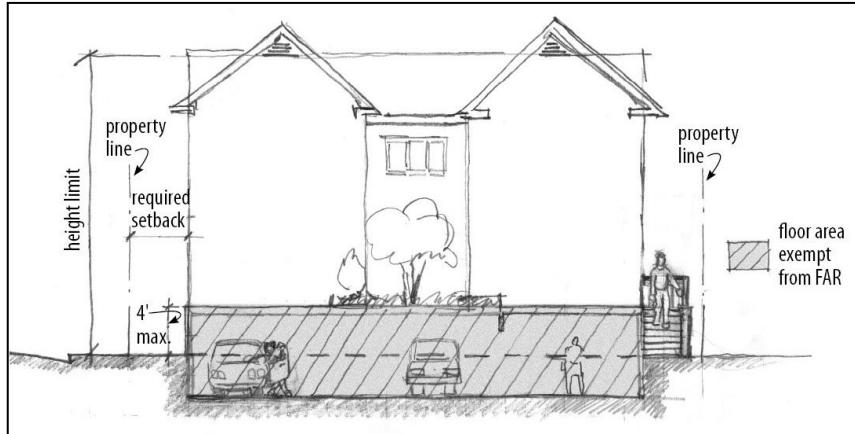
For rowhouses and townhouses, we recommend that there be a maximum height of 30' to the top of the building wall. This would not be a change from the current L3 zone, and would be a decrease of 7 feet in the current L4 zone. However, we also recommend that additional height be allowed if the developer provides desirable design features.

The first option to gain height above 30 feet would be an allowance for an additional 10 feet for a roof that is pitched at a rate of at least 6:12, provided that the building has a maximum of three stories. The photograph below of townhouses in Seattle Authority Authority's High Point development illustrates how this could work. The townhouses are about 30 feet high at the top of the wall, while the pitched roof extends to about 40 feet. The structure provides three floors with generous floor to ceiling heights within this envelope.



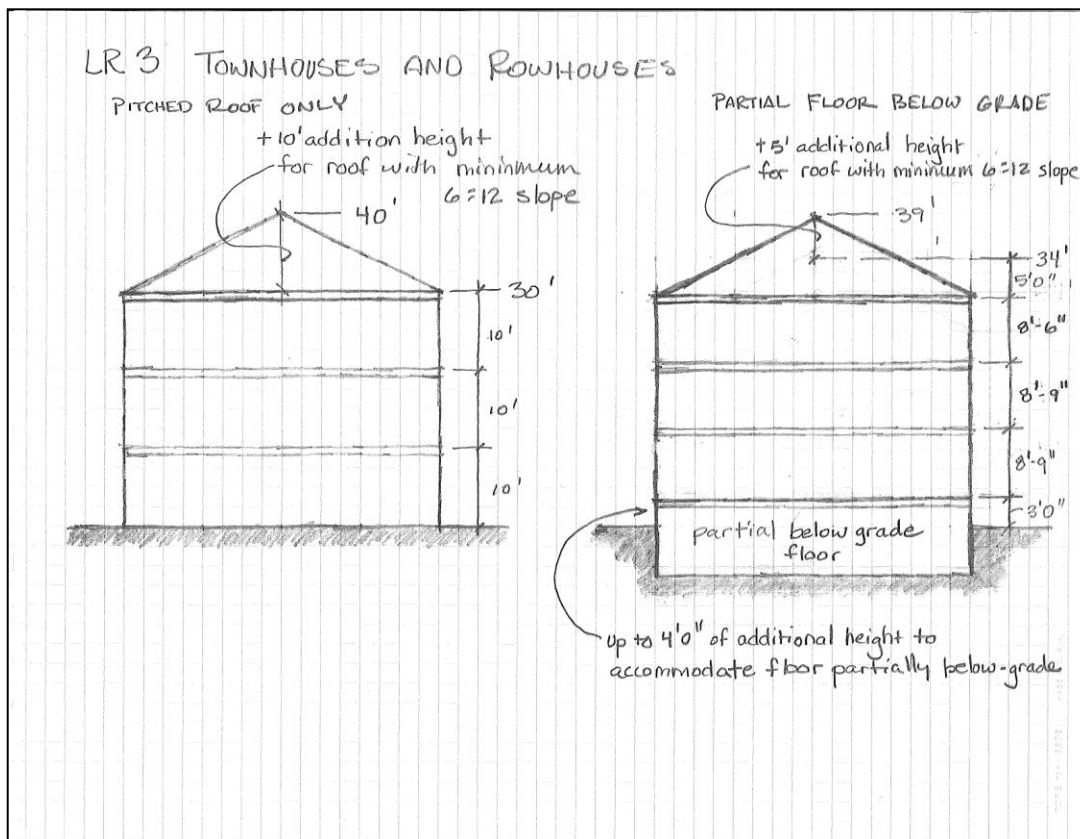
The second proposed option for rowhouses and townhouse to gain additional height is to allow an additional four feet of wall height, so that the main floor of the structure can be elevated above street level without the loss of an upper floor. This provides more privacy for the units, avoiding the need for continuous fencing at the front lot line, and encourages better design features, such as front stoops. It also provides flexibility for sloping sites. A rowhouse or townhouse taking advantage of this exception would be limited to three floors. Diagram 1 below illustrates this idea, which has already been put in place in Midrise zones.

Diagram 1: Illustration of a partially buried first floor, for which a height exception of four additional feet is proposed



In addition to the exception for the partially buried first floor, we recommend that a pitched roof exception be provided. However, if the two exceptions are combined, the pitched roof would only allow five additional feet, not ten. Diagram 2 illustrates both proposed options.

Diagram 2: Options for townhouse and rowhouse height exceptions in LR3 zones



Of the 211 acres currently zoned L4, 94 acres are located in the Seattle Housing Authority's (SHA) High Point development in West Seattle. While the proposed height limit of 30 feet is lower than the 37 feet that is now allowed there, we believe that the options we have proposed for desirable design features would provide SHA with the flexibility they need. In fact, our recommendations have been developed using examples from High Point, as shown above.

## 2B. Height Limits for Apartments in LR3 zones

As shown on Table 2, we are proposing different heights for apartments in LR3 zones, depending on whether they are located in or out of a designated growth area (urban centers, urban villages and station area overlay districts). The proposed height limits reflect the floor area ratio (FAR) limits that we will be proposing next week, which would allow greater development potential inside designated growth areas.

Outside of designated growth areas, the proposed base height limit for apartments (measured from grade to the top of the wall) would result in a seven foot height increase for L3 zones, and no change for L4 zones. Inside designated growth areas, our recommendation would result in a base height increase in current L3 zones of ten feet, or 14 feet if the proposed four foot increase for a partial floor is included. For L4 zones, it would be an increase of three feet, or seven feet if the proposed four foot increase for a partial floor is included. Diagrams 3 and 4 below illustrate options for apartment development inside and outside of designated growth areas.

Diagram 3: Proposed Height for Apartments outside of designated growth areas

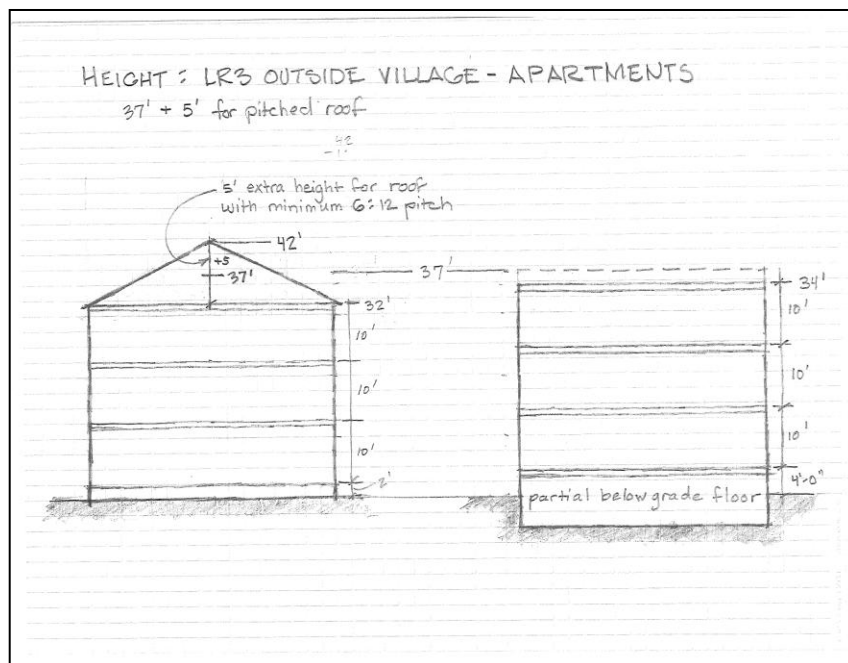
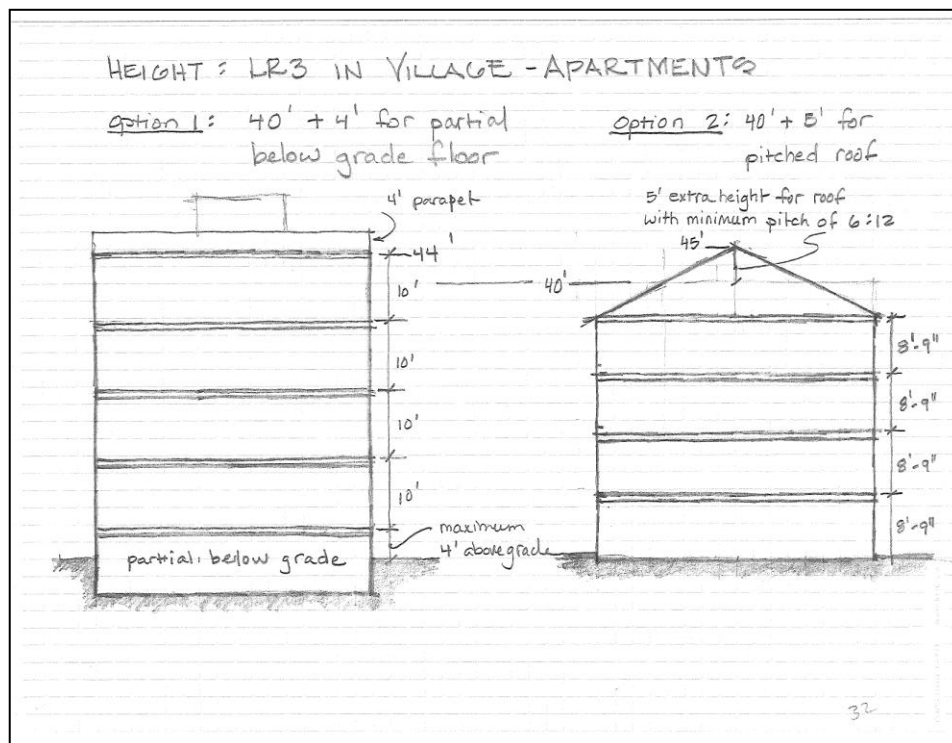


Diagram 4: Proposed Height for Apartments inside designated growth areas



These recommendations support the goal of making it possible again to build four-story apartment buildings in the densest lowrise multifamily zones, while encouraging desirable design features. The proposed height and FAR limits would work together to allow somewhat larger buildings in LR3 zones inside designated growth areas.

The Planning Commission supports increasing the height limit in the current L3 zones to at least 37 feet, although they have not had a chance to comment on the idea of differentiating between housing types, or areas inside and outside designated growth areas.

The following code language would implement the staff recommendations for height limits in the new lowrise zones. It reflects the direction you gave at the last Committee meeting for heights in LR1 and LR2 zones, and the recommendations presented in this memo. New wording shown underlined and deleted text ~~crossed out~~.

#### **23.45.514 Structure height in ~~Midrise and Highrise~~ zones**

A. Subject to the additions and exemptions allowed as set forth in this Section 23.45.514, structure heights permitted in Lowrise zones are as shown on Table A for 23.45.514, and the Bbase and maximum structure heights permitted in Midrise and Highrise zones are as shown in Table AB for 23.45.514, ~~subject to the additions and exemptions allowed as set forth in this~~

Section 23.45.514. The maximum height for accessory structures, except accessory dwelling units, is 12 feet.

**Table A for 23.45.514: Structure Height for Lowrise Zones**

|   | <u>Cottage Housing</u>   | <u>Rowhouses</u> | <u>Townhouses</u> | <u>Apartments</u>                    |
|---|--------------------------|------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <b><u>LR1</u></b>   | <u>18'<sup>(1)</sup></u> | <u>30'</u>       | <u>30'</u>        | <u>30'</u>                           |
| <b><u>LR2</u></b>   | <u>18'<sup>(1)</sup></u> | <u>30'</u>       | <u>30'</u>        | <u>30'</u>                           |
| <b><u>LR3</u></b>   | <u>18'<sup>(1)</sup></u> | <u>30'</u>       | <u>30'</u>        | <u>37' or 40' <sup>(2) (3)</sup></u> |
| <sup>(1)</sup> The height limit is 20 feet for carriage house dwelling units located above a garage and other accessory dwelling units meeting the standards in this Chapter.<br><sup>(2)</sup> For apartments on lots that abut a single family zone, the height limit is 30 feet for a distance of 50 feet from the lot line(s) that abut the single family zone.<br><sup>(3)</sup> The higher height limit applies in urban centers, urban villages, and station area overlay districts. |                          |                  |                   |                                      |

**Table AB for 23.45.514: Structure Height for Midrise and Highrise Zones**

|   | <b><u>MR</u></b> | <b><u>MR/85</u></b> | <b><u>HR</u></b> |
|---|------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| Base height limit   | 60'              | 85'                 | 160'             |
| Maximum height limit if extra residential floor area is gained under Chapter 23.58A and Section 23.45.516 | 75'              | 85'                 | 240' or 300'     |

B. In LR3 zones, the height limit may be increased by 4 feet if the number of stories in the structure that are more than 4 feet above existing or finished grade, whichever is lower, does not exceed three for rowhouses and townhouses and four for apartments.

\* \* \*

D. In LR3 zones the ridge of pitched roofs on principal structures may either:

1. extend up to ten feet above the maximum height limit for rowhouses and townhouses that do not use the height exception provided in 23.45.514.B; or
2. extend up to five feet above the maximum height limit for rowhouses and townhouses that use the height exception provided in 23.45.514.B; or.
3. Extend up to five feet above the maximum height limit for apartments.



All parts of the roof above the height limit established in Table A for 23.45.514 shall be pitched at a rate of not less than 6:12).

\* \* \*

The following code section would be deleted:

**~~23.45.009 Structure height -- Lowrise zones.~~**

~~A. Maximum Height. The maximum height permitted for all structures, except for cottage housing developments, shall be as follows:~~

- ~~— Lowrise Duplex/ Triplex — Twenty five (25) feet~~
- ~~— Lowrise 1 — Twenty five (25) feet~~
- ~~— Lowrise 2 — Twenty five (25) feet~~
- ~~— Lowrise 3 — Thirty (30) feet~~
- ~~— Lowrise 4 — Thirty seven (37) feet.~~

**Committee direction on changing the height limits in L3 and L4 zones**

**Next Steps**

At the next Committee meeting on March 25, we will present further recommendations on height exceptions, and propose FAR limits for lowrise zones.

Attachment A: Map of urban villages with frequent transit service